

PROFESSIONAL ASSURANCE INITIATIVE: WETLAND DELINEATION

Applying for Assurance

You may apply at any time to have your wetland delineation work reviewed for assurance by the Department of Natural Resources. Two options are available for application to the program:

Option 1. Requires completion of steps A and B below:

- A. Submit one report from the current year's growing season in which the applicant is the lead field investigator and author. For example, if applying for assurance in 2013, the report must be from the growing season of 2013.
 - This report will undergo an office review, followed by a field review attended by the applicant and WDNR staff. After the field review WDNR staff will provide feed-back related to the applicant's work, with an emphasis placed on providing guidance to improve future report submittals for the assurance program.
 - To ensure a timely review, applicants are encouraged to submit the report no later than September 15.
 - A report submitted at the end of the growing season may have to wait until the following spring before the field review can be completed.
- B. Submit five additional reports for technical review within one year of the field review.
 - Reports need to have been completed within the last 24 months, of which four are problem or atypical sites, and for which the applicant is the lead field investigator and author.

Option 2. Requires completion of step A below:

- A. Submit six reports for technical review.
 - Reports need to have been completed within the last 24 months, of which four are problem or atypical sites, and for which the applicant is the lead field investigator and author.
 - If the reports pass the technical review, a site review, attended by the applicant and WDNR staff, may be scheduled to evaluate the accuracy of the applicant's field work.

Application Materials

In addition to the wetland delineation reports, please supply the following required information with all application packets:

- Resume including education, training, and work experience relevant to wetland delineation
- Transcripts and listing of courses relevant to wetland delineation
- Documentation of Training Courses

Application Criteria

In order to maintain the highest level of environmental protection, the integrity of the profession, and the integrity of the program in the eyes of the public, the following minimum educational, training, and experience requirements will apply for those seeking professional assurance

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Wetland delineation is an applied science that requires education, training, and experience to accurately assess the presence or absence of three parameters – hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetland hydrology. Based on the three-parameter nature of wetland delineation, WDNR recognizes that Professionally Assured Wetland Delineators will likely have a broad range of technical specialties.

The following education and training criteria must be met for acceptance into the Wetland Assurance Program:

A. Education

Completion of a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, or equivalent or higher degree that includes sufficient emphasis on one or more of the wetland parameters. For example:

- Biological Sciences (Ecology, Botany, Limnology, Wildlife Biology, Fisheries Biology, Conservation Biology, etc.)
- Soil Science, Geology or other similar physical science
- Hydrology
- Other programs such as Natural Resource Management, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Engineering, Urban and Rural Planning, and Landscape Architecture, provided the program included coursework in botany, biology, soil science and/or hydrology.

Be sure to include transcripts, as well as a list of courses that display your background in plant identification, soil interpretation, and/or hydrology.

B. Training

Completion of a 40-hour wetland delineation training course that is based on the COE Wetland Delineation Manual, applicable regional supplements, and related guidance, such as “Reg IV” training or an equivalent course offered by a government agency or a reputable private firm. Because familiarity with Wisconsin’s landscape is preferred, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Basic and Advanced Wetland Training Workshops or Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory IV training held in Wisconsin are recommended; however, training completed in a similar region will be considered. For example, training completed in Michigan, Minnesota, or northern Illinois will likely provide the background necessary for accurate wetland boundary identification in Wisconsin.

Specific training related to wetland plant identification, wetland hydrology, and hydric soil identification will also be evaluated to determine an applicant’s level of expertise as it relates to wetland delineation. Be sure to include documentation of training courses with the application packet.

EXPERIENCE

Professional assurance requires a minimum of five (5) years of full-time professional experience during which the applicant’s primary focus was wetland science. Experience begins following conferral of the first relevant degree at a baccalaureate or higher level. Full-time work experience is defined as a minimum 75% of daily/weekly/monthly duties devoted specifically to wetland science. Work experience below the 75% threshold will be credited on a pro-rated basis. Relevant experience must be gained within ten (10) years prior to applying for professional assurance.

WORK PRODUCT

To become assured, delineators must demonstrate proficiency in applying the COE Wetland Delineation Manual, appropriate regional supplements, and related guidance. Delineation reports submitted for review must meet the following conditions:

- The individual who is applying must be shown as the primary individual who conducted the fieldwork and authored the report.
- Delineations must have been completed within the 24 months preceding the application.
- The sample delineation reports must include two reports during which Atypical Situations were encountered and two reports during which Problem Areas were encountered. Atypical Situations are areas where one or more wetland parameter have been obscured by some recent change, and Problem Areas are wetlands that are inherently difficult to identify because one or more wetland parameter may be absent or misleading, at least at certain times of the year.
- The sample delineation reports should reflect wetlands commonly found within the geographic range(s) where the delineator works.

Wetland delineation reports will be evaluated for the following:

- Consistent and proper application of the COE Wetland Delineation Manual, applicable regional supplements, and related guidance documents.
- Inclusion of enough technical information to completely and accurately reflect field conditions, and methodology used to interpret soils, hydrology, and plant species information gathered as part of a boundary determination, per COE Wetland Delineation Manual, applicable regional supplements, and related guidance documents.

Significant mistakes or omissions, including missing wetlands on a particular site, will result in a decision not to assure wetland delineation work.

Delineation reports of individuals who meet the education, training and experience criteria, and who submit delineation reports of the appropriate types, will be reviewed by a panel of state, federal or local agency experts in wetland delineation. The panel may not include members who compete for clients with consultants. The panel approves assured status through utilization of a scored, weighted, rating form that evaluates an applicant's consistency in properly applying wetland delineation protocols described in the COE Wetland Delineation Manual, applicable regional supplements, and related guidance.

To submit application materials or request information about the Wetland Assurance Program, contact:

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